

IOWA BIRD LIFE

Fall 1987

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IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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The IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. *Iowa Bird Life* and *I.O.U. News* are quarterly publications of the Union.

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Thomas H. Kent, Editor, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240
Carl J. Bendorf, Circulation & Fall Field Reports Editor, 825 7th Ave., Iowa City, IA 52240
W. Ross Silcock, Christmas Bird Count & Winter Field Reports Editor, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653
Robert K. Myers, Spring Field Reports Editor, RR2 Box 153, Perry, IA 50220
James J. Dinsmore, Summer Field Reports Editor, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010

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Institutions may subscribe to *Iowa Bird Life* for \$15 per year. Individuals may join the Iowa Ornithologists' Union according to the following membership classes: Regular (\$12); Regular as spouse or minor child of another Regular member without publications (\$4 first additional family member, \$2 each additional family member); Contributing (\$12 plus any additional tax-deductible contribution to the I.O.U.); and Life (\$250 as single payment or \$62.50 for each of four years). Members will also receive the quarterly *I.O.U. News* and are eligible to vote and hold office in the Union. Send subscriptions, membership payments, or address changes to Francis L. Moore, Treasurer, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703.

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Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other materials relating to birds and bird finding in Iowa should be sent to the editor. Accepted manuscripts will generally be published promptly, depending on space available, with the following absolute deadlines: 15 November for the Winter issue; 15 February for the Spring issue; 15 May for the Summer issue; and 15 July for the Fall issue. Most manuscripts will be refereed. All material should be typed double-spaced or hand printed in ink on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. Authors should pattern their style after a current issue of the journal. If you want more detailed guidelines or advice regarding the appropriateness of your topic for *Iowa Bird Life*, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the editor.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS OF IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

*13-15 November 1987, 4 H Camp, Luther

*20-22 May 1988, Mason City

FIELD REPORTS

Anyone observing birds in Iowa is encouraged to report their findings on a quarterly basis to the Field Reports editors. Sample reporting and documentation forms suitable for duplication are available from the editor (send self-addressed stamped envelope to T. H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240). An article describing the reporting process is also available.

Deadlines for receipt of field reports are as follows:

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*Spring (Mar, Apr, May)—3 June (Robert K. Myers, RR2 Box 153, Perry, IA 50220)

*Summer (Jun, Jul)—3 August (James J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010)

*Fall (Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov)—3 December (Carl J. Bendorf, 825 7th Ave, Iowa City, IA 52240)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

*Deadline for receipt of reports: 15 January. For forms and instructions write: W. Ross Silcock, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653.

IOWA BIRDLINE 319-622-3353

The birdline is a two to three minute recorded summary of interesting recent bird sightings in Iowa. At the end of the report you can leave a message and report recent sightings. Be sure to give your name and phone number as well as the location of the bird and date seen. Call in as soon as possible after sighting a rare bird. Carl Bendorf checks the reports daily and updates the recording on Monday, so make sure Sunday sightings are reported by Sunday night.

I.O.U. NEWS

Send items of interest for the newsletter to the editors (J. Hank and Linda Zaletel, 715 West St., Colo, IA 50056).

MATERIALS AVAILABLE

The following materials may be obtained by writing the editorial office (Iowa Bird Life, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240):

*Order form for back issues of *Iowa Bird Life*: send self-addressed stamped envelope.

*Field Checklist of Iowa Birds—1987 Edition: 10 for \$1.65, 25 for \$3.50, 100 for \$11.60, postpaid.

Also available at annual meetings for \$0.10 each.

REPORTING NEBRASKA BIRDS

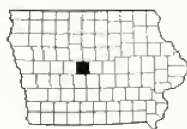
Sightings of Nebraska birds, including those within the Nebraska portion of De Soto N.W.R., should be reported to Loren and Babs Padelford, 1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, NE 68005. Formats for reporting and documentation are the same as for Iowa.

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BIRDING LEDGES STATE PARK

STEVE DINSMORE AND HANK ZALETET

As early as the Civil War era, residents of Boone County used the Ledges as a picnic area. In 1921, the state purchased the area as a park; Carl Fritz Henning, a charter member of the Iowa Ornithological Association and the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, was custodian until 1941. The park is 3 miles south of Boone on the east side of the Des Moines River.



The park's 859 acres contain "hills and valleys, dark ravines and sunny glens, massive rocks and spring-fed streams, upland and meadow, river and woods, trees, shrubbery, mosses and flowers" (Pammel, L. F., C. F. Henning, and J. E. Smith. 1928. Ledges State Park. Des Moines: Iowa Board of Conservation). The deep cuts of Davis and Peas creeks through the bedrock account for the "ledges."

The main attraction of Ledges State Park is the wide variety of woodland birds that can be found in this relatively small area, including nesting southeastern species such as Acadian Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush. Over 230 species of birds have been seen in the park including such rarities as Little Blue Heron, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Yellow Rail, American Avocet, Carolina Wren, Northern Mockingbird, and Black-throated Blue, Pine, Prothonotary, Worm-eating, and Hooded warblers. Over 90 species have nested, including Red-shouldered Hawk and Bewick's Wren. Birding is best during migration and in summer.

Entrances to the park are on the north (Iowa 164), the east (3 miles west of Iowa 17), and from the south (1.5 miles north of county road E57). From the main entrance to the park on the east (1), a one-way road, open from April to early November, leads down Peas Creek to the river. A large restored prairie (2) lies west of the main entrance and is a reliable spot for Eastern Meadowlark.

The first parking lot (3), which is 0.2 miles west of the prairie and 0.1 miles beyond the beginning of the one-way road, is a good place to park and walk down the steep incline to the valley floor. Yellow-bellied and Alder flycatchers can be heard along the road in late May and early June, and Acadian Flycatcher, Veery, Yellow-throated and Red-eyed vireos, Ovenbird, and Scarlet Tanager are summer residents. The deep ravine that leads east from the bend in the road (4) is a good location for Louisiana Waterthrush and Kentucky Warbler. The second parking lot is just past the first bridge (5). Look for Eastern Phoebe under the bridge and Cerulean and Kentucky warblers in the woods nearby. Phoebes can be found under other bridges and in the cliffs throughout the canyon. The upper stretch of Peas Creek can be explored by walking the creek bed. In migration look for Mourning Warbler in the lush undergrowth. Connecticut Warbler has been found in spring. A small open area (6), 0.1 miles upstream from the parking lot, always has Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Cerulean Warbler. The most recent sightings of Hooded Warbler have been in this area.

Along Peas Creek, Veery, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Kentucky Warbler are all fairly common. A pair of Broad-winged Hawks nest in the area each year. The narrow canyon from the parking lot at 5 to the parking lot near

the mouth of Davis Creek (7) concentrates migrant passerines. Look in the scattered trees along the creek. Northern Rough-winged and Bank swallows nest on the cliffs in this section of Peas Creek. A pair of Cerulean Warblers can usually be found near the parking lot at 7.

To bird Davis Creek, walk north in the creek bed for 0.2 miles. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Veery, American Redstart, and Louisiana Waterthrush are found along the creek and Kentucky Warbler is found in the oak-lined bluffs to the east (8).

The last parking lot in the canyon (9) is a good spot for Acadian Flycatcher and the large cottonwood to the east usually has Northern Parula or Yellow-throated Warbler in summer.

A small parking lot at the junction with Iowa 164 (10) overlooks the Des Moines River. The small backwater to the north has nesting Wood Duck, and other ducks and shorebirds may be present when the water is low.

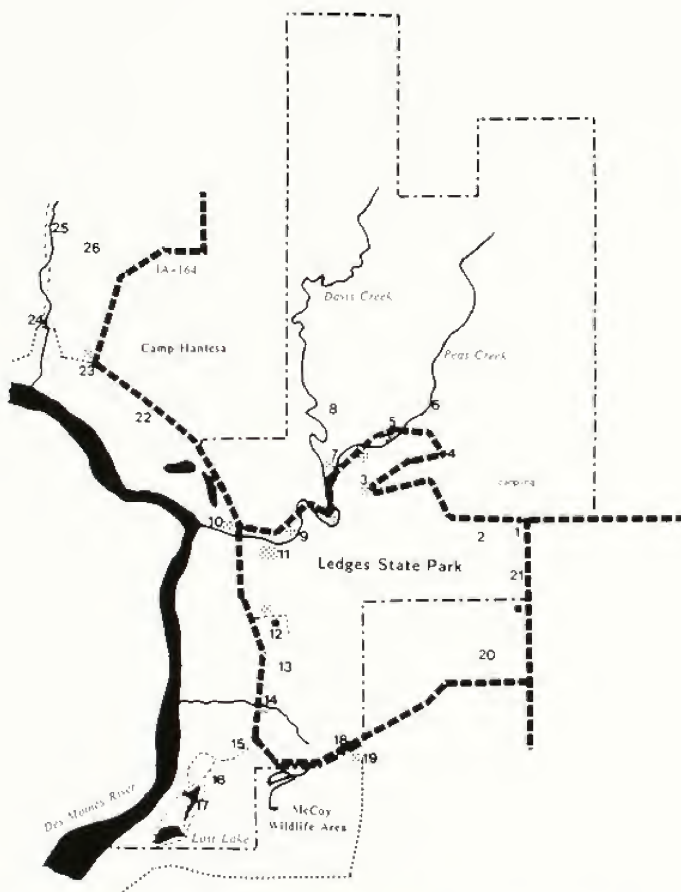
There is a large parking lot south of Peas Creek (11). In spring and summer, the best place to see Northern Parula and Yellow-throated Warbler is in the cottonwoods and sycamores that are between the parking lot and Peas Creek. Barred Owl and Whip-poor-will can be heard here at night.

A service road, 0.1 miles south of the large parking lot, heads east toward an old cabin (12). The large white pines and sycamores around the cabin consistently have summering Yellow-throated Warbler and are good for migrant passerines. This is also a good place to view migrating hawks in fall. Sharp-shinned and Broad-winged hawks follow the bluffs and are often seen in large numbers, along with many Osprey.

Lark Sparrows nest in the grassy field south of the old cabin (13); Blue-winged Warblers can be found along the east edge in summer. To the south of the grassy field, a small stream passes under the road (14). Look for American Redstart in the hardwoods near the stream and Cerulean Warbler in the tops of taller trees near the river.

A parking lot 0.2 miles uphill from the bridge (15) is the entrance to the Lost Lake area. Park and follow the trail southwest until it splits (75 yards); look for Blue-gray Gnatcatcher in the trees to your right. Take the left branch heading south along the west edge of a large open area (16). American Redstart is common in summer along the edge of the open area, and a pair of Blue-winged Warblers is always present, particularly in the scrubby trees near the south end. In early spring, American Woodcock display in the open area. Southwest of this field is a small, dammed pond (17). From November to March, 1 to 3 Northern Saw-whet Owls have been found in the small cedars surrounding the pond. If an owl is not found around the pond, check the cedars on the ridges to the east and west of the pond and those around Lost Lake. Watch for whitewash and pellets. On occasion, Long-eared Owls have roosted in some of the larger cedars around the pond. Wood Duck and Louisiana Waterthrush have nested at the pond and Lost Lake. A path circles around Lost Lake to the east and back along a ridge on the west side, but Lost Lake has not been a good birding spot.

McCoy Wildlife Area is a 200-acre state-owned area separate from the park. One-half mile uphill and east of the parking lot to Lost Lake is an old deer pen (18). Wild Turkey have been seen on the back side of the pen. The parking lot for McCoy Wildlife area (19) is just east of the deer pen on the south side of the road. A 1-mile-long old farm lane provides a walking path



to the river. The lane passes through fields with Grasshopper Sparrow and Bobolink, through wooded areas with clearings that contain Blue-winged Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Orchard Oriole, and on to river bottom woods with Wild Turkey, Veery, Northern Parula, and Cerulean Warbler.

The T intersection with E57 is 0.7 miles east of the McCoy Wildlife Area. The large, overgrown field to the northwest (20) is worth checking in winter for Northern Shrike. Eastern Bluebirds nest north of the park attendant's house (21), and Northern Mockingbird has been found here several times.

A state-owned area near Camp Hantesa lies to the northwest of Ledges State Park on Highway 64. A weedy field on the west side of the highway (22), 0.2 miles northwest of the mouth of Peas Creek, is a good spot for wintering White-throated, White-crowned, and Harris' sparrows. There is a pull-out 0.2 miles beyond the weedy field where Iowa 164 turns north (23). A farm lane leads west for 0.2 miles, then north to a small creek (24). From the west side of the creek a trail leads north. Northern Saw-whet Owls, and occasionally Long-eared Owls, have been found in the small cedars along the creek (25), especially on the east side, and on the ridge to the east (26). Blue-winged Warbler, and occasionally Kentucky Warbler, have been found along the creek in summer.

4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010; 715 West St., Colo, IA 50056

BIRDING BAYS BRANCH AND LAKIN SLOUGH

STEVE DINSMORE AND BOB MYERS

Bays Branch and Lakin Slough are 797- and 320-acre Public Hunting Areas located in northeast Guthrie County. Bays Branch is a long narrow area with a man-made lake starting 2 miles east and 2 miles north of Panora. Lakin Slough is a natural slough on the same creek, 1.5 miles north of Bays Branch. These areas can be birded in 2 to 3 hours, or one can spend all day with considerable hiking in the more remote areas. The areas provide a migration corridor in spring and fall for waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, and passerines. Keep an eye up for Merlin and Peregrine Falcon.



In addition to the lake, Bays Branch contains marshy edge, wooded areas at the margin of the lake, pine plantings, and upland fields. The water level is sometimes kept low in summer to stimulate plant growth for waterfowl; the resulting mud flats often attract large numbers of shorebirds. The area is good for waterfowl in migration, and many remain into winter when the weather is mild. Canada Geese are raised in open pens near the headquarters at the southeast end of the lake.

The south end Bays Branch is 2 miles east of highway 4 and 2 miles north of highway 44. The goose pen (1), on the headquarters road, attracts many species of waterfowl and shorebirds are often found on the edges.

The deep water of the south end attracts diving ducks and has produced Greater Scaup and Black Scoter. A large pull-off high on a hill overlooking the south end of the lake (2) is a good place to scope for waterfowl. They congregate here in fall because it is a refuge and in winter because it is the last water area to freeze. Eared Grebe, large flocks of American White Pelican, and migrating raptors and shorebirds can be seen here.

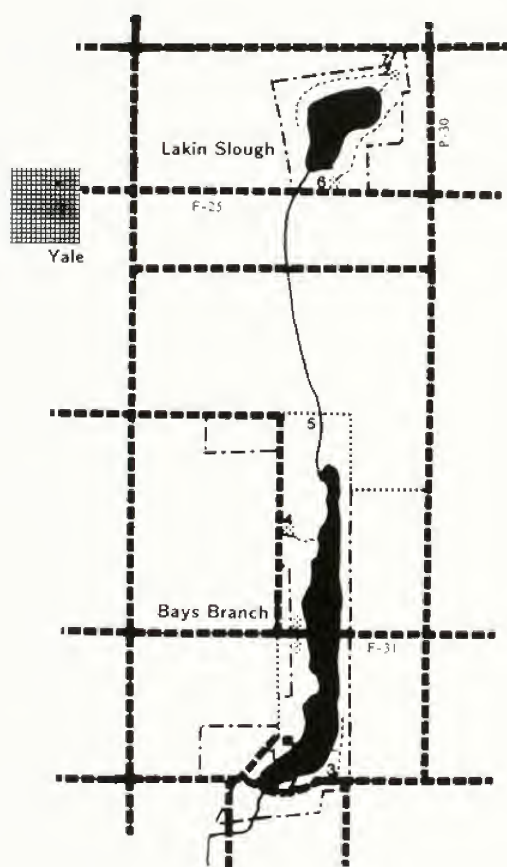
At the southeast corner of the area (3), a lane runs north for 0.2 miles. Park on the road and walk through grassy and brushy areas that often harbor sparrows until you reach the mouth of a creek, where American Bittern, Black-crowned Night-Heron, and Virginia Rail are possibilities.

The bridge over the center of Bays Branch is reached by driving 0.5 miles east, 1.0 miles north, and 0.5 miles west. After scanning north and south for herons, waterfowl, shorebirds, and pipits, park to the south or north on the west side of the lake and walk along the shore. During low water, the area is particularly good for shorebirds.

Go north on the county road that hugs the west edge of the area for 0.7 miles to another parking lot (4). A service road leads east through long hedge rows that can be excellent for sparrows; Bell's Vireo and Yellow-breasted Chat have been found in summer. In winter, look in the long rows of pines and clumps of red cedars along the lake for Long-eared and Short-eared owls.

The north edge of Bays Branch (5) contains dense grassy areas where rails and Le Conte's or Sharp-tailed sparrows are possible. The dirt road to the east, when passable, may afford good views of the lake.

Lakin Slough is a natural marsh that is only accessible by walking from two locations, but the effort may produce species such as Snowy Egret,



White-faced Ibis, Peregrine Falcon, Common Morehen, and Great-tailed Grackle.

The south access to Lakin Slough (6) is 2 miles east of Yale on county road F25. The isolated wooded area near the parking lot may attract migrating passerines, such as the seventeen species of warblers found one day in May 1986. Walk the service road along the east edge of the marsh to a clump of smaller trees. More energy is required to continue along the edge of the marsh in search of rails and sparrows.

The north access to Lakin Slough (7) is reached by driving east to county road P30, then north for 1.0 miles, and then west 0.2 miles. Waterfowl on the open water can be seen from here. From the boat ramp, walk along the canal to the open water. This area is good for rails and Common Morehen; during low water shorebirds may abound. Great-tailed Grackles nested on the north side of Lakin Slough in 1986.

A service road that proceeds west from the north parking lot and turns south along the west edge of the area provides another access to the marsh and contains edge that may be good for sparrows.

4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50010; RR2, Box 153, Perry, IA 50220

A LIFETIME WITH BOOKS IS NOT A BAD WAY TO LIVE*

FRED J. PIERCE

[Born on a farm southeast of Winthrop, Iowa, shortly after the turn of the century, Fred Pierce pursued his family's agricultural calling as a young man and then farmed himself for about 20 years. He worked as a newspaper reporter, did office work, and subsequently joined the staff of the Biology Section of the Iowa Conservation Commission. His exposure to the works of Ernest Thompson Seton as a child kindled an interest in natural history - particularly ornithology - that continued throughout his life. A lifetime book collector, he became a bookseller in 1944 and continued in the trade under the name of Pierce Book Company, specializing in natural history. He has written extensively on Iowa bird life.--JLC]



Fred Pierce and his late wife, Reva, who helped him run his natural history book business.

Bookselling, it has been said, is a very pleasant way to make a very little money - an interesting half-truth that shows there is a sense of humor out there somewhere. Most of us would confess that selling books for a profit is secondary to a love of books. A lifetime with books is not a bad way to live, even though many of these printed friends cannot stay permanently and must be sold. Despite trials and tribulations for booksellers, the pleasures always shine through.

My bookselling began in 1944, in a building that was formerly a filling station on U.S. Highway No. 20, a mile east of Winthrop, Iowa. It was started on a shoestring - I had not much money and very little stock. In 1948, I moved into Winthrop.

Catalogues 1 and 2 were merely one-sheet broadsides. The first formal printed catalogue was No. 3, which had eight pages made from hand-set type and was printed in an edition of 400 copies by a minister who did job printing as a hobby. Including mailing envelopes, the total cost was \$19. My first customer was from Cedar Rapids, Iowa; he ordered Roberts' *Bird Portraits in Color*, published by University of Minnesota Press, and it was drop-shipped to him. The publisher took a chance on me and billed me on open account!

Catalogues 4 and 5 were produced in the same way, but with No. 6 (1946) we went to a linotype job by a commercial printing firm. The size of the catalogues grew steadily, to a peak of 44 pages and editions of up to 14,000 copies. They tapered off after that as the business had grown steadily and was getting too unwieldy for my wife and me to handle. It was run

under the name of Fred J. Pierce through Catalogue No. 15 in 1951, then changed to Pierce Book Company with No. 16.

Two catalogues a year were issued - spring and fall - each with a different etching of bird or animal on the cover. The catalogues contained a great deal of careful bibliographic information, and for this reason a number of customers saved the whole series (which ended with No. 72 in 1979) and had them bound. I still get requests for back issues from collectors who are trying to complete their sets. Those were the days of free catalogues, and we sent them to everyone who asked, even to whole classes of grade-school kids, whose teachers had each of them ask for a catalogue as a writing assignment!

The Pierce Book Company emblem was a little screech owl, drawn by one of my artist friends, E.W. Steffen. It became quite well known, as we used it on all checks, envelopes and various office forms. I even had it cast into a solid brass printing block so I could put it on the spines of all my buckram-bound serials; the gold titles and other data, as well as the owl, are necessarily burned into the cloth with hot brass type.

In 1968, I went to the hospital in Rochester, Minnesota, for open-heart surgery. A pacemaker was installed and I have had periodic replacements since then. My son Paul and his wife Marjorie came into the business as partners in 1968 after my hospitalization, and Paul built a new house in Winthrop. He lived there only a year and a half before suffering a fatal heart attack in early January 1970. He was 41 1/2 years old. His wife died in August 1979 following a train-auto collision. We had great hopes for the future of the business, but "the best laid plans...."

My son, his wife, my wife Reva, and I had been running the business with only incidental outside help in addressing, stuffing and sorting catalogues by zip code for the post office. We closed the business and dispersed the inventory as soon as we could after Marjorie's death. Reva died in March 1981.

Once we had a letter from a man in a far western city. He had several rare folio volumes of Audubon for sale. He described them carefully and offered them to us. I wrote him that we were not interested in buying them, but we would contact him if we heard of someone who was. We soon did - the police department of his city! They said some Audubon folios had been stolen and they were inquiring of several book dealers to learn if they had been offered to them.

I sent the man's letter to them at once, and told them I would like to know how the case was resolved, but I never heard from them.

On one occasion a man in the West (I believe South Dakota) bought a limited edition book from us (about \$60, as I recall). We ordered it from the publisher, but they sent him an imperfect copy: blank pages, blurred impressions or some other defects. We returned it for him and the publisher sent him another - this one also imperfect! Understandably, by this time his pot of anger boiled over profusely. Again the book was replaced. The publisher sent us a telegram and one to him, explaining that such an incident would happen only once in 50,000 times.

Another time, Mrs. Marlin Perkins, wife of the host of a television nature program, called us and said that natural history author Roger Caras was coming for a visit and she wanted some of his books for him to autograph.

My wife called a Boston publisher with a special order to have the books sent at once to St. Louis by airmail.

The order was evidently thrown into the hopper routinely with other book orders. The books were sent airmail - yes, indeed - but three weeks later! We complained to the Boston sales manager, but his profuse apologies didn't help much.

In one order we sent four or five packages to Dominica by registered bookpost. First, they got caught in a dock strike and evidently were buried later by the post office. The customer began writing about the books that had been paid for but never received, and the post office began putting tracers on them. (At that time the post office paid only a little over \$7 per package for lost registered items.) Nine months later, when we were about to refund the \$300 paid for the books, they were delivered. What a relief!

A little old lady in Minnesota used us as a lending library for a period of several months. She would order a book, keep it about a week or 10 days, return it with some little excuse for returning it, and order another one. This went on until our patience was exhausted. I made a refund of her original purchase money and told her we were discontinuing our bookseller/client relationship.

And then there was the schoolteacher who was working on a special conservation course. She ordered a half dozen or more books on open account. In two or three months, when the course was finished, she returned them all!

We had two ladies of different names in two different states, who sent numerous orders for a year or two. Their handwriting was almost identical and they invariably ordered the same books. Sometimes the orders came almost the same day. I finally got nerve enough to inquire from one lady, who said I had uncovered their secret. They were identical twins!

In the age of machine-made books, there are always imperfect copies. Publishers try to catch them, but many go through and are discovered when the customer complains and sends them back.

We sold quite a number of Ripley's *Rails of the World*, an expensive item with many colored plates. All were perfect except one; fate had that one go to Uruguay! It had some blank pages, a printer's error. What a time to get the matter straightened out! In addition to the geographical separation of bookseller, publisher, and customer, the transaction was further complicated by the language barrier.

When we were selling bird-song records (two double-faced records in an album), people began returning them because one side of a record was duplicated, and lacked the other side. We sent several to the publisher for replacement. Their office called us by phone to see how many bad copies we had on hand. It turned out that we had three bad ones out of five in stock.

They told us to send them back, and said the warehouse manager was going to tear his hair out, as every one of the albums would have to be played back after opening and the bad ones weeded out. In the later ones we received, we could see where the box seal had been broken and then sealed again. What work and expense! We wondered how many they had in stock - maybe hundreds.

We prided ourselves in the careful wrapping of books. In the 35 years of bookselling, we received only a few reports of damaged books, though half

a dozen or more small packages never reached their destination. They could have been left on porches by the postman, after which neighborhood dogs or kids took over.

One customer informed us that he had received hundreds of packages of books, and we should not insure ours to him. In a very short time, one of our packages to him was destroyed in a post office fire. It was insured and we were reimbursed by the post office. One lady shipped books to us without insurance though we advised her to insure. The package was rifled somewhere en route and she was the loser.

We literally shipped books around the world without damage. One shipment of several packages went to South America, and was returned to us by a South American customs office which had failed to notify the addressee of its arrival. After some correspondence with a somewhat irate customer, the packages were mailed again - three trips to and from South America without damage to contents.

But we had plenty of trouble with customers who returned books for one reason or another and failed to wrap them properly. A piece of paper and a store string around an expensive book usually means a copy with bent covers and other damage. Some people will even write their names in books before returning them as new copies. Our policy was that the customer was always right (within reason), and we refunded without question on everything that was returned.

Publishers are always willing to replace defective books. I have seen books with sections missing, sections duplicated or in the wrong place. Others had covers upside down, a not uncommon defect, or even had the wrong cover. I saw a nature field guide with a cloth cover for an entirely different subject. I wondered how many of those the machine bound before somebody noticed.

The sending of unsolicited and unwanted books to us was often a problem. We always told people to send lists of their books before they sent anything, but sometimes the books came without warning.

An old man sent us several big packages from Florida. We were always apprehensive about books from regions of high humidity, and invariably inquired about this when making offers. The gentleman assured us his books were in "A-1" condition. They turned out to be the worst mess I have ever seen - musty smelling from mildew, pages browned with mildew and stuck together from dampness, many cloth covers rotted. We had to return the entire shipment at our expense, of course.

'Broken Promises, Misplaced Trusts'

I have noticed a deplorable thing that sometimes happens to a book collector. He wants his private library kept intact and in perpetuity when he is gone. In his search for a permanent place for his beloved books, he casts about for an institutional library that will offer such protection. The donor receives assurance from the library that the collection will be put on special shelves, in safekeeping for all future time.

This is a fine promise and most institutions will abide by it. But there are others, hopefully in the minority, that are faced with space limitations and the problem of keeping many unneeded duplicates. There may be changes in administrators with different ideas. Agreements are circumvented and promises go out the window. Thus, duplicate books are disposed of. From

one viewpoint, it is good business policy; from another, it is the breaking of a sincere trust.

One of my good friends had taught in a small college for most of his life. He had built up a fine bird library, especially rich in long runs of serials, all nicely bound. I have sat with him in his library and admired his books, of which he was justly proud.

He was getting along in years and wanted to place his library where it would be permanently appreciated and useful to students and researchers. He couldn't think of its being broken up and the books scattered.

A representative of another college approached him with a proposition that seemed to be perfect. He would be given an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters or some other dignified title. The books would be transferred to the college after his death, with the promise, either written or implied, that they would remain as an undisturbed entity. In addition, his widow was to be paid \$1,000. The collection contained about 1,000 books, many of them scarce and valuable, and the payment was likely about a tenth of their actual value at that time.

But the satisfaction of knowing the books were going to a safe, perpetual home far outweighed the financial consideration. His books were duly moved to their new home.

In a later year, when both my friend and his widow had passed on, a professor of my acquaintance visited the college library and asked to see the special bird-book collection with the bound runs of serials. He was thunderstruck when told that most of it had been sold as an economy measure!

Broken promises and misplaced trusts! I would be suspicious of any institutional offer to take a private collection and keep it in unconditional perpetuity. A cash sale with no promises is a different proposition.

A letter from one of my friends, now deceased, illustrates another case: "An example of what an institution will do to a fine series of beautifully bound books was well illustrated here in our own library. Ingersoll gave his fine set of *The Condor* to the museum library. They were bound in green morocco, all alike. The bobtailed museum set was in red cloth. Do you think the gal would get rid of the red ones and keep the set? No, sir! She picked out a half dozen of the greens and mixed them with the reds and exchanged or sold the rest. That cured me of ever giving anything to the place, bird or mammal collections, books or anything else!"

My own collection is comprised largely of bird books, as bird study has been a major interest from teen-age through adult life. I have been particularly interested in collecting and binding the various journals of state bird societies. This interest was heightened by the fact that I published the first issue of *Iowa Bird Life*, the official quarterly of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, and stayed on as editor for the next thirty years (1931-1960).

From some fine acquisitions made when buying bird libraries for the Pierce Book Company, I became interested in collecting what I call the "Extinct Nature Serials," many of which flourished prior to 1900. A number of them were the work of quite skilled amateurs; some were in very small printings. Their rarity adds zest to the search for them. I have 135 runs of these, with 50 completed and bound. But many are so rare they can never be completed.

Some collectors keep such publications in folders without binding. I am a crank on binding, and think it is the only positive preservation. When one looks fifty years down the road, with the possibility of misplacing, mistreating or losing certain issues, one knows the bound journals will still be complete and ready for reference, barring fire or natural disasters.

I bind the publications just as they are received, with all covers and advertising in place. Some librarians and binders will discard covers and advertising, but this is a bad mistake. They are just as much a part of the magazine as the formal contents. Indeed, some of the advertising, especially before the turn of the century, is the most fascinating part.

I am now retired, and I turn even more frequently to my book collection, which continues to give me many hours of pleasant browsing.

** This article first appeared in AB BOOKMANN'S WEEKLY, September 15, 1986. Forward is by the Editor and Publisher, Jacob L. Chernofsky.*

IN MEMORIAM: MYRA G. WILLIS

ROBERT F. VANE

Myra G. Willis of Cedar Rapids, a past president of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, died on 24 June 1987. She was born in Aurora, Illinois, on 25 June 1896 and graduated from Coe College in 1927. Her early teaching career was in country schools of South Dakota, where she lived in the sod houses of the parents of her pupils. Myra returned to Cedar Rapids and taught biology at Wilson Junior High and Jefferson High School, retiring in 1962.

Myra was a charter member of the Cedar Rapids Bird Club, which was organized in 1929 by Coe College instructor W. F. Kubichek. She was president of the club at three different times: 1930-1932, 1954-1955, and 1963-1965. She joined the Iowa Ornithologists' Union in 1929, contributed several notes and articles to *Iowa Bird Life*, and served as president from 1966 to 1968.

Myra was a staunch defender of truth. As a teacher, she was thorough, demanding correct answers and accurate spelling. Her position on issues was always clear. Her knowledge of the outdoors was broad, encompassing more than birds. Once on a field trip when I asked her about oaks, I received a dissertation on the distinguishing characteristics of the leaves and bark of the oak family.

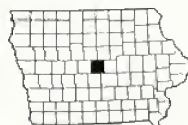
Life is a gift and opportunity, and Myra made the most of both. Her friendship and influence touched many.

2220 Grande Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403

FALL WARBLER MIGRATION AT BROOKSIDE PARK IN AMES

PAUL MARTSCHING

In order to determine migration intervals and peaks for fall warblers, I made daily observations at Brookside Park from 1982 through 1986 in a manner similar to that reported for spring warbler migration (Martsching 1986). The spring and fall data allow comparison and discussion of the sequence, duration, and routes of migration, and habitat differences.



METHODS

The habitat and survey methods were the same as previously described for spring migration (Martsching 1986). In brief, I made counts along a 2,800 meter pathway through Brookside Park. The habitat is in the flood plain of Squaw Creek in Ames, Iowa, and consists of about half open woodland and half woodland with dense undergrowth. Counts were made from mid-August through October for 64 percent of the days in 1982, 55 percent in 1983, 61 percent in 1984, 54 percent in 1985, and 90 percent in 1986.

The standard counting time was one hour. This was adequate time to cover the entire route except during periods of heavy migration. If more time was spent, the counts for each species were factored to reflect a one hour count. Birds were identified to about 30 meters from the path in open areas and to 10-15 meters where there was undergrowth. In contrast to spring, none were identified by song alone.

Habitat preference of fall warblers was studied for six days in the fall of 1986 (23, 28, and 29 August; 1, 2, and 4 September) by recording whether birds were in mowed open areas with numerous large trees or areas with trees and dense undergrowth.

The relative frequency of each species in spring and fall was studied by comparing the average yearly counts from 1982 through 1986 for each species in fall to the average yearly counts in spring (Martsching 1986, Table 3). The spring counts represent nearly daily observations over six weeks, while the fall counts represent about 60 percent of days over eleven weeks for 1982 through 1985 and 90 percent of days for 1986. The data were factored for one hour's observation per day, but no factoring was done to account for missed days.

RESULTS

The median and extreme dates for fall arrival, departure, and peak counts for 22 species of warblers are shown in Table 1. The dates of all observations of seven rare fall warblers are shown in Table 2. Table 3 gives data on the magnitude of migration (number per year, high daily counts, and mean daily counts), the length of migration (migration interval), and fall/spring ratios.

Species that typically arrive in the third week of August include Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, and Wilson's, Canada, and Blackburnian warblers (Table 1). Those that typically arrive later in August

Table 1. Median (and Range of) Dates for Arrival, Peak Numbers, and Departure of Fall Warblers at Brookside Park, 1982-1986

Species	Arrival Date	Peak Date	Departure Date
Golden-winged	24 A (16 A-1 S)		15 S (6 S-22 S)
Tennessee	24 A (14 A-10 S)	4 S (18 A-21 S)	7 O (3 O-12 O)
Orange-crowned	5 S (31 A-10 S)	19 O (7 O-21 O)	23 O (8 O-28 O)
Nashville	3 S (18 A-6 S)	24 S (13 S-3 O)	17 O (13 O-21 O)
Northern Parula	27 A (23 A-4 S)	16 S (13 S-22 S)	30 S (25 S-10 O)
Chestnut-sided	23 A (14 A-29 A)	14 S (23 A-22 S)	28 S (25 S-2 O)
Magnolia	24 A (12 A-31 A)	16 S (24 A-22 S)	28 S (13 S-1 O)
Cape May	* (12 A-25 A)	* (25 A-31 A)	* (9 S-22 S)
Yellow-rumped	15 S (25 A-3 O)	14 O (3 O-21 O)	24 O (21 O-31 O)
Black-thrt'd Green	4 S (21 A-14 S)	19 S (29 A-26 S)	14 O (25 S-23 O)
Blackburnian	21 A (14 A-1 S)	27 A (18 A-2 S)	22 S (18 S-2 O)
Palm	* (22 S-3 O)	* *	* (6 O-21 O)
Bay-breasted	29 A (14 A-6 S)	9 S (20 A-15 S)	1 O (23 S-6 O)
Blackpoll	4 S (18 A-9 S)	16 S (28 A-18 S)	27 S (23 S-29 S)
Black-and-white	16 A (15 A-20 A)	4 S (21 A-22 S)	2 O (25 S-13 O)
American Redstart	17 A (12 A-28 A)	4 S (23 A-22 S)	21 S (25 S-2 O)
Ovenbird	29 A (18 A-10 S)	9 S (27 A-22 S)	16 S (25 S-2 O)
N. Waterthrush	31 A (15 A-6 S)	31 A (22 A-4 S)	20 S (6 S-26 S)
Mourning	* (18 A-31 A)	* (2 S-4 S)	* (20 S-22 S)
C. Yellowthroat	summer resident		23 S (14 S-28 S)
Wilson's	19 A (15 A-28 A)	2 S (21 A-15 S)	25 S (13 S-3 O)
Canada	20 A (16 A-24 A)	24 A (21 A-28 A)	21 S (13 S-29 S)

* = too few to evaluate

A = August; S = September; O = October

Table 2. Dates for Fall Warblers Seen Fewer Than Ten Times

Blue-winged: 15 Sep 1982

Yellow: 20 Aug 1983; 1 Sep 1982

Black-throated Blue: 2 Sep 1984; 9 Sep 1982; 11 Sep 1983; 13, 17, 30 Sep 1986

Pine: 24 Aug 1985; 3 Sep 1984; 6 Sep 1983; 21 Sep 1986

Cerulean: 24 Aug 1983; 26 Sep 1986

Kentucky: 21 Aug 1985

Connecticut: 3 Sep 1984; 22 Sep 1985

Table 3. Yearly, Peak, and Hourly Numbers and Migration Interval of Fall Warblers at Brookside Park and Fall/Spring Ratios, 1982-1986

	Mean/ Year	Highest Daily Count, Yearly Range	Mean Number/ Hour*	Migration Interval Mean Days (Range)	Fall/ Spring
Golden-winged	4	1-2	0.4	20 (4-35)	1.0
Tennessee	74	3-37	2.1	47 (34-54)	0.2
Orange-crowned	24	1-12	0.6	46 (38-52)	0.3
Nashville	119	15-47	3.8	49 (39-61)	0.7
N. Parula	10	3-4	0.5	35 (24-43)	1.3
Chestnut-sided	91	13-19	2.7	20 (12-26)	2.3
Magnolia	36	1-12	1.1	18 (15-25)	1.0
Cape May**	10	0-4	0.4	29 (29)	***
Yellow-rumped	183	29-47	6.5	45 (28-68)	0.6
Black-thrt Green	15	1-3	0.6	38 (12-57)	1.3
Blackburnian	15	1-5	0.6	36 (32-40)	1.9
Palm**	2	0-2	0.1	17 (15-19)	0.4
Bay-breasted	83	8-14	3.0	38 (26-49)	27.7
Blackpoll	9	1-3	0.4	27 (15-44)	0.2
Black-and-white	61	6-18	2.0	47 (42-53)	1.8
Am. Redstart	52	6-16	1.8	42 (36-51)	1.0
Ovenbird	26	4-25	1.2	35 (23-45)	0.7
N. Waterthrush	8	1-2	0.5	18 (1-35)	1.0
Mourning**	3	0-3	0.1	34 (23-44)	0.2
C. Yellowthroat	3	0-2	0.1	summers	0.1
Wilson's	28	5-8	1.2	37 (17-44)	1.0
Canada	24	5-7	1.1	34 (21-45)	4.0

* mean number/hour during the migration interval

** seen in only 2 years

*** 46 birds in fall of 1986 distort meaningfulness of ratio

Table 4. Habitat Preference of Warblers for Six Days in Fall of 1986

Species	Number of Birds Found In	
	Open Area	Undergrowth Area
Tennessee	100	5
Chestnut-sided	37	70
Magnolia	6	30
Cape May	22	0
Blackburnian	10	2
Bay-breasted	31	72
Black-and-white	12	38
Am. Redstart	7	31
Ovenbird	0	22
Mourning	0	8
Wilson's	9	7
Canada	2	15

include Chestnut-sided, Golden-winged, Tennessee, and Magnolia warblers, Northern Parula, Bay-breasted Warbler, Ovenbird, and Northern Waterthrush. Those that typically arrive in the first week of September include Nashville, Black-throated Green, Blackpoll, and Orange-crowned warblers. Yellow-rumped Warbler is the latest, with median arrival date of 15 September. The earliest Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers often precede the second birds by days to weeks.

Of the regular fall warblers, those with median departure dates in the third week of September include Golden-winged Warbler, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart, and Canada Warbler. Those that typically are last seen later in September include Blackburnian Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's, Blackpoll, Chestnut-sided, and Magnolia warblers, and Northern Parula. Median departure dates are in the first week of October for Bay-breasted, Black-and-white, and Tennessee warblers, and later in October for Black-throated Green (14th), Nashville (17th), Orange-crowned (23rd), and Yellow-rumped (24th) warblers.

Peak counts for most species occur in early to mid-September, but some peak in late August (Canada and Blackburnian warblers and Northern Waterthrush) and two peak in October (Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned warblers). The average migration intervals, which tend to be longer in fall than spring, ranged from 17 to 49 days. As might be expected, the migration interval tends to be much longer for commoner species.

The most common fall species were Yellow-rumped, Nashville, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Tennessee, and Black-and-white warblers (Table 3). Eight species were considered more common in spring than fall (fall/spring ratio < 0.7): Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Palm, Blackpoll, and Mourning warblers, and Common Yellowthroat. Nine species were present in roughly equal numbers in spring and fall (fall/spring ratio 0.7 to 1.3): Golden-winged and Nashville warblers, Northern Parula, Magnolia and Black-throated Green warblers, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, and Wilson's Warbler. Five species were considered more common in fall (fall/spring ratio > 1.3): Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Black-and-white, and Canada warblers.

Habitat preference for 12 species during six days in the fall of 1986 are shown in Table 4. Cape May Warblers were found exclusively in open areas; Ovenbird and Mourning Warbler were always in areas with undergrowth. Tennessee and Blackburnian warblers preferred open areas; Magnolia, Black-and-white, and Canada warblers and American Redstart preferred undergrowth. Chestnut-sided and Bay-breasted warblers were common in both habitats.

Most warblers do not sing in fall. Species that I have occasionally heard include Golden-winged, Tennessee, Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Green, and Black-and-white warblers and American Redstart.

DISCUSSION

Factors that can bias the results of a study such as this one include the amount of time spent, the time of day, visibility within the various habitats, varying activity and location of different species, the span of the study period, and missed days within the study period. In this study the observation

time was controlled by spending one hour per day or factoring the results to one hour's observation time. Most counts were made in the morning. The heavy undergrowth found in fall likely caused an underestimate of species that prefer this habitat.

If a species uses the same route in spring and fall, higher numbers must pass through the area in fall due to the addition of young birds to the population. Attempts to count the numbers, however, are influenced by a variety of factors. Singing biases counts toward spring, particularly for those species that sing loudly. Linger during migration biases results toward fall if counts are made every day. Perhaps the missed days in my fall counts may have compensated for the possibility of repeated counting of the same birds. There is no way of knowing how closely the observed fall/spring ratios reflect the true ratios, but the data suggest some differences among species, especially those with fall/spring ratios greatly different from 1.

For several species, a difference in migration pattern appears to account for the difference in numbers of fall and spring birds. Four species that winter in Central and northwest South America (Chestnut-sided, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, and Canada warblers) had high fall/spring ratios. These species migrate north from Central America through Texas and span out to the east and west to reach nesting areas across Canada and Northern United States. In fall migration they are funneling to the southwest, so they may be concentrated on the western edge of their migration route which includes Iowa. The very high fall/spring ratio for Bay-breasted Warbler has been substantiated in eastern Iowa by Petersen's banding studies at Pine Hill Cemetery (Dinsmore et al. 1984), in Minnesota (Green and Janssen 1975), in Wisconsin (Kumlein and Hollister 1951), and in Illinois (Graber, Graber, and Kirk 1983). The reverse of this situation occurs with Blackpoll Warbler, a species that winters in tropical South America and migrates north through Florida to nesting grounds in Alaska and across Canada. The northwestward movement in spring may concentrate birds on the western edge of the migration route (including Iowa), but in fall this species has a distinct tendency to migrate to the East Coast and then south (Nisbet 1970). The striking decrease of Blackpoll Warbler in the Midwest in fall is substantiated in Iowa (Dinsmore et al. 1984) and in Illinois (Graber, Graber, and Kirk 1983). Black-throated Blue, Cape May, and Connecticut warblers migrate through Florida in spring and fall and nest in northern areas, but they are too rare in Iowa to provide meaningful fall/spring ratios. Cape May Warbler is uncommon west of Quebec except in years of spruce budworm outbreaks (Griscom and Sprunt 1957), which could account for the large numbers seen in Iowa in the fall of 1986. Other northern nesting species that avoid the Florida migration route include Tennessee, Nashville, Magnolia, and Mourning warblers. Of these, only Magnolia Warbler shows a consistent fall predominance in Iowa and Illinois (Dinsmore et al. 1984; Graber, Graber, and Kirk 1983).

Some of the apparent fall/spring differences can be explained by habitat choice. Black-and-white Warbler prefers bottomland in fall (Graber, Graber, and Kirk 1983), an observation that could explain the relatively high frequency at Brookside Park in fall. Tennessee Warbler prefers trees in spring and open brushy areas in fall. This fits with the relatively high numbers banded at Pine Hill Cemetery in fall and low numbers at Brookside Park

during the same season. The same trend holds true for Nashville Warbler, although it is less striking. Habitat preference likely affects the occurrence of Yellow and Palm warblers and Common Yellowthroat at Brookside Park. These common species are only moderately common or uncommon at Brookside Park in spring and are rare in fall.

The dates of the study period may have produced aberrant low counts for some species. Some resident species, such as Yellow Warbler and Common Yellowthroat, may have started migrating before mid-August. Numbers of Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers may have been low due to missed count days in October; other studies in Iowa and Illinois have found these species to be more common in fall than spring.

Differences in the ease of detection may account for some of the differences in numbers between spring and fall. Tennessee and Mourning warblers are species that are usually detected by song in spring and were found much less frequently in fall. In spring, males are identified more frequently than females. In fall, females and young predominate. Identification is a potential problem with fall warblers. The consistent data among several studies for Bay-breasted and Blackpoll warblers, species which are among the hardest to separate, suggests that this was not a significant factor in my study.

The order of fall warbler migration tends to be in reverse order from that of spring. Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned warblers are first and second in spring and last and next to last in fall. Black-and-white Warbler, however, is third in spring and first in fall, because this species leaves the breeding area soon after the young are able to care for themselves (Bent 1953). American Redstart, another exception to the rule, has an average spring arrival time and is the third earliest in fall, a finding that is not surprising because this species nests in Iowa. Bay-breasted Warbler has a late spring arrival time, but is average in fall.

The mean migration interval is longer in fall than spring for all species except Yellow Warbler, which is rare in fall, and Common Yellowthroat, which cannot be evaluated because it is a resident at Brookside Park. On the average, 317 Tennessee Warblers pass through in 26 days in spring, while it takes 47 days for 74 to pass through in fall.

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312 S. Russell, Ames, IA 50010

FIELD REPORTS--SUMMER 1987

JAMES J. DINSMORE

WEATHER

The weather can be described in a word--hot. The first seven months of 1987 were the warmest such period, and June was the tenth warmest on record. Statewide, there were an average of 10 June days with temperatures of 90 or higher, twice the June average. The heat continued on into July with the last 10 days being mostly 90 plus throughout the state. As would be expected, there were numerous reports of temperatures of 100 or higher. In general, it was dry in eastern and southeastern Iowa where rainfall was considerably below average, while western Iowa had more precipitation. As is typical of most summers, there were some heavy rains. Parts of southwestern Iowa received in excess of 6 inches of rain in early June, leading to some local flooding. In mid-July, parts of Worth, Cerro Gordo, and several other counties received as much as 6 inches of hail. There were also the usual scattered sightings of tornadoes.



GENERAL TRENDS

Probably the major effect the hot weather had on this report was on the birders rather than the birds. I received about the usual number of contributions, but, in general, the reports were shorter, suggesting less field time by many birders. There were a number of uncommon species found breeding this year including Canvasback, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, King Rail, Common Barn-Owl, Long-eared Owl, Whip-poor-will, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Worm-eating Warbler, Blue Grosbeak in southeast Iowa, and Henslow's Sparrow. For Henslow's Sparrow, this is the first definite evidence of nesting for the state, although the species certainly must have nested here before. The continued nesting by Piping Plover and Least Terns near Council Bluffs was good news, although the reduced numbers of the former is disturbing. The apparent partial recovery of Carolina Wren and Northern Bobwhite is also good news. Finally, the encouraging reports of nesting by American Kestrel, Eastern Bluebirds, and Loggerhead Shrikes suggest some recovery by these species in Iowa. The nesting season seems to have been a fairly good one.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

In general, this was a fairly dull summer. Casual species included Say's Phoebe, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Great-tailed Grackle, and House Finch. The House Finch continued its march across Iowa, while the Great-tailed Grackle was reported less this year than last. What happened to the birds seen at the spring meeting in Sioux City? Documentations for three accidentals that would be firsts for Iowa (Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Laughing Gull, Steller's Jay) and an unprecedented summer Prairie Falcon

await review by the Records Committee. No details were received for a Rufous Hummingbird that was said to have returned to St. Olaf for the second year in a row. Several other birds (Western Grebe, Bufflehead, and American Avocet), although regular in Iowa, were good finds this summer.

SPECIES DATA

* = documented

Common Loon: 1 at L. Macbride on 6 Jun (TJS) was the only report.

Pied-billed Grebe: Adults with young were seen in Jun at Big Wall L. (MPr), Walker Sl. and Morse L. in Wright Co. (MPr), Jemmerston Sl. (MPr), Spring Run (MPr), s of New Albin (BPr, MPr), and Forney L. (TB).

Western Grebe: 2 adults were at Ingham L. on 27 Jun (HW).

American White Pelican: 1 summered at Union Slough N.W.R. (J. Guthrie fide SD); other reports were 13 at Forney L. on 5 Jun (TB) and 10 there on 20 Jun (JF), 1 at Coralville Res. on 4 Jul (RJH), and 1 at Saylorville Res. on 31 Jul (SD).

Double-crested Cormorant: 1-8 birds were reported from several C, SW, and E Iowa locations.

Least Bittern: 1-5 were reported from Allamakee, Bremer, Clinton, Fremont, Madison, Mills, Winneshiek, and Wright counties.

Great Blue Heron: The colony at Otter Creek M. was active (Ed Weiner fide BB). At Cardinal M. Red-tailed Hawks at a nest in the middle of the colony apparently deterred nesting (DK). The 82 at Saylorville Res. on 28 Jul. (SD) were the only evidence of a post-breeding buildup.

Great Egret: 1-4 were reported from 3 locales in June.

Little Blue Heron: 2 immatures on 23 Jul and 1 adult on 26 Jul near Nebraska City (WRS) were the only reports.

Cattle Egret: 2 on 5 Jun in Mills Co. (TB) was the only report.

Green-backed Heron: A nest with 2 young was found s of Stratford on 10 Jul (DAR).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: 2 at Big Sand Mound Preserve on 12 Jun (PCP) and 9 at Jemmerston Sl. on 23 Jun (MPr) were the only reports.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: 1 adult on 9 Jun in SW Fremont Co. (TB) and 2 adults and an immature in NW Warren Co. on 13 and 21 Jun (JSi) were the only reports.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: One photographed near Boone on 29 May (*SE) will be referred to the Records Committee.

Snow Goose: 4 were in Mills Co. on 5 Jun and 10 were at Forney L. on 9 Jun (TB); 1 summered at Bays Branch (Robert Myers fide SD).

Wood Duck: Broods were reported from Big Sand Mound Preserve (PCP) and Sioux City (JJ).

Green-winged Teal: Single males were at Goose L., Clinton Co., on 4 Jun and Canoe Creek, Winneshiek Co., on 1 Jul (DK).

Northern Shoveler: 2 were in Mills Co. on 5 Jun (TB).

Canvasback: 1 adult and 9 young on 23 Jun se of Lake Park (DCH) was the first nesting in that area in four years.

Bufflehead: A male near Brandon, Buchanan Co., on 27 Jun (JF) is the third summer record for Iowa.

Hooded Merganser: A brood at Otter Creek M. (Ed Weiner fide BB) and a male on 3 Jun at McIntosh Sl. (TL) were the only reports.

Ruddy Duck: 1 on 27 Jun at Sweet M. (JF) was the only report.

Turkey Vulture: 1 on 5 Jun in O'Brien Co. near Peterson and 4 on 9 Jul in Lyon Co. near Inwood (DCH) were out of the usual range for this species.

Bald Eagle: There were at least 2 active nests along the Mississippi R. this year (PCP, DAR).

Northern Harrier: Nests were found in Howard Co. (Jim Ripple fide DAR) and SC Iowa (Melvin Moe fide DAR). Singles were reported from near Tipton on 17 Jun (PCP), at Badger Creek L., Madison Co., on 20-31 Jul (EIA, EuA), and in Dickinson Co. on 24 Jul (HW).

Cooper's Hawk: Nests with young were found near Bellevue on 30 May (DK), near Marquette on 3 Jun (DK), and near Bluffton on 1 Jul (DK); 2 adults and 2 fledglings were seen on 16 Jul near McGregor (DK). Single adults were reported on 12 Jun at Coon Creek, Winneshiek Co., and on 27 Jun at Effigy Mounds N.M. (DK). When combined with the two reports from spring, this is the most nesting ever reported for this species in Iowa in one year.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Koenig found them at the usual NE Iowa locations.

Broad-winged Hawk: Singles were reported from Effigy Mounds N.M. (JF), Fort Madison (RCe), Ledges S.P. (DAR), and Waubesa S.P. (MPR, BPR).

Swainson's Hawk: A nest at George Wyth S.P. fledged 2 young (FLM).

American Kestrel: 13 of 27 nest boxes along Interstate 35 in Story Co. were used this summer, an indication of the success of the kestrel nest box program.

Prairie Falcon: 2 reported from Cherokee Co. on 28 Jul (*MMB) are unprecedented for summer in Iowa.

Gray Partridge: Broods were reported from Boone, Greene, Jackson, Polk, and Story counties.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Several observers indicated brood counts were high this year.

Northern Bobwhite: Several reports indicated numbers were up. Birds were reported in Lyon (DCH) and Woodbury (JJ) counties, out of the species normal range. Brood counts by the Department of Natural Resources were up 108%.

King Rail: 1 adult and 2-3 young were found on 7 Jul near Maquoketa (*JF, JPS). I also received a report of 2 adults and a young bird on 3 Jul 1986 at Dubuque (*GEC).

Virginia Rail: 2 on 18 Jun at New Albin (DK), 1 on 27 Jun at Sweet M. (JF), and 2 on 18 Jul at Cardinal M. (DK) were away from the pothole country where this species is usually found.

Common Moorhen: A brood was at Ventura M. on 19 Jun (TL). Other reports were from Allamakee, Bremer, Clinton, Fremont, Winneshiek, and Wright counties.

American Coot: A brood was near New Albin on 11 Jun (MPR, BPR). An adult found on 26 Jun at Coralville Res. was one of the few seen there recently in summer (THK).

Lesser Golden-Plover: 1 was at Bays Branch on 31 Jul (SD).

Piping Plover: There were only 3 nests at the IPL Ponds this year. Eggs hatched at each and at least 1 young fledged (BLW).

American Avocet: Singles were reported at Coralville Res. on 26 Jun (RJH, THK) and Bays Branch on 12 Jul (Dennis Thompson fide EuA). The former is the earliest fall record.

Lesser Yellowlegs: There were 2 on 3 Jul at Coralville Res. (THK) and 100 at Credit Island on 21 Jul (PCP).

Solitary Sandpiper: There were 9 on 3 Jul at Coralville Res. (THK) and 10 along the Iowa R. in Hardin Co. on 4 Jul (JSi).

Willet: 3 on 29 Jun at Polk City (EIA, EuA) were the first, while 8 on 2 Jul at Badger Creek P. in Madison Co. (EIA, EuA) and 8 at Saylorville Res. on 31 Jul (SD) were the most reported.

Upland Sandpiper: There were no reports of nests or broods; 1-3 adults were seen in Boone, Cedar, Clinton, Emmet, Howard, Madison, Marshall, Polk (4 sites), Poweshiek (2 sites), and Story (2 sites) counties.

Ruddy Turnstone: 4 at Saylorville Res. on 3 Jun (PW) was the only report.

Sanderling: 5 on 3 Jun at Saylorville Res. (PW) is the second latest spring record; 10 at Saylorville Res. on 25 Jul (SD) ties the earliest fall record. A few remained to the end of July.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: 1 near Colo on 9 Jun (HZ) is the second latest spring record.

Western Sandpiper: 2 at Polk City on 1 Jul (MPR, details) set an earliest fall record. Singles were at Credit Island on 21 Jul (PCP) and near Slater on 26 Jul (SD).

Least Sandpiper: 4 on 3 Jul at Coralville Res. (THK) ties the second earliest fall date; 4 on 4 Jul in Hardin Co. (JSi) were also early.

White-rumped Sandpiper: 1 on 5 Jun in Mills Co. (TB) was the last spring report.

Baird's Sandpiper: Singles near Slater on 26 and 28 Jul (SD) were the only reports.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 1 was at Saylorville Res. on 3 Jun (PW) and 114 were at Bays Branch on 31 Jul (SD).

Stilt Sandpiper: 1 was at Credit Island on 20 Jul (PCP) and 13 were in Story County on 25 and 28 Jul (SD).

Short-billed Dowitcher: A peak of 32 were reported from Credit Island on 21 Jul (PCP).

Long-billed Dowitcher: 3 at Ankeny Ponds on 18 Jul (EIA, EuA) were identified by their call.

American Woodcock: Broods were found at Highlandville, Winneshiek Co., on 10 May (DK) and in Wildcat Den S.P. on 7 Jun (PCP).

Wilson's Phalarope: 1 near Slater on 28 Jul (SD) was the only report.

Laughing Gull: Two reports will be referred to the Records Committee.

Franklin's Gull: 1 on 5 and 9 Jun in Mills Co. (TB) and 1 on 25 and 31 Jul at Saylorville Res. (SD) were the only reports.

Ring-billed Gull: The usual summering birds were on the Mississippi R. in Lee Co. (RCe) and at Davenport (PCP), and in the Great Lakes region (DCH); 400 in Lee Co. on 30 Jul (RCe) and 82 at Saylorville Res. on 31 Jul (SD) were probably migrants.

Caspian Tern: 1 on 25 Jul and 4 on 31 Jul at Saylorville Res. (SD) were the only reports.

Common Tern: 2 on 11 Jul at Saylorville Res. (JF), 8 on 21 Jul near Credit Island (Brian Blevins fide PCP), an adult on 25 and 27 Jul at Saylorville Res. (SD), and an immature there on 31 Jul (SD) were the first summer records in several years.

Forster's Tern: Nesting was reported at Ventura M. (TL) and Jemmerson Sl. (PCP). Others, presumably migrants, were 2 on 20 Jun on the Mississippi R. in Lee Co. (RCE), 1 on 13 Jul at Davenport (PCP), and 52 on 25 Jul at Saylorville Res. (SD).

Least Tern: 11 nests on 17 Jun and 4 more in Jul (renests?) at the IPL Ponds (BLW) is down slightly from 1986. Singles on 25 and 31 Jul at Saylorville Res. and 25 Jul at Big Creek S.P. (SD) were away from this species usual range.

Black Tern: 3 nests were at Big Wall L. on 7 Jun (EM). The 60 birds on 3 Jun at Saylorville Res. (PW) and 100 on 4 Jun at DeSoto N.W.R. (TB) were late for spring migrants. The 6 on 8 Jul at Swan L. in Johnson Co. (JF) and 16 on 31 Jul at Saylorville Res. (SD) were fall migrants.

Black-billed Cuckoo: 1 or 2 were reported in Harrison, Mills, Woodbury, and Wright counties.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Singles were reported in Allamakee, Mills, and Van Buren counties.

Common Barn-Owl: Nesting was reported from Adair and Mills counties (DAR).

Eastern Screech-Owl: A brood was seen several times in July at Birmingham, Van Buren Co. (JPS).

Long-eared Owl: A recently fledged young was found on 3 Jun at Brushy Creek, Webster Co. (*DAR).

Short-eared Owl: 1 was seen on 17 Jun in Pocahontas (RDe) and an injured bird was found in mid-summer in Fayette Co. (Greg Woodley fide DAR).

Chuck-will's-widow: 2 were at the usual site near Waubonsie S.P. on 1 Jul (MPR, BPR).

Whip-poor-will: A nest with 2 eggs on 5 Jun in Yellow River F. (DK) and a fledgling on 13 Jul in Poweshiek Co. (DK) seem to be the first definitive nesting records for several years.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Reports came from Allamakee (5), Clayton (6), Dubuque (3), Fremont, Poweshiek, Van Buren, and Winneshiek (7) counties.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Koenig found 5-20 each in Allamakee, Clayton, and Winneshiek counties, its usual Iowa nesting range. An active nest was found on 11 June s of New Albin (MPR, BPR). Singles on 3 Jun near Ocheyedan and 5 Jun along the Little Sioux R. w of Peterson (DCH) suggest nesting in NW Iowa too.

Pileated Woodpecker: A nest with 2 young on 23 May at Brush Creek Canyon (DK) is one of the few recent nest records for Iowa. Two in West Des Moines in late Jun (JSi) were unexpected there.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: There were several lingering migrants including 1 near Spirit L. on 9 Jun (DCH) and 1 at Canoe Creek, Winneshiek Co., on 12 Jun (DK); the latter is the second latest.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 1 on 8 Jun at Liscomb (MPR, BPR, details) is the second latest, and 1 at Shimek F. near Argyle on 7 Jun (RCE, FLM) ties the third latest date.

Acadian Flycatcher: 1-4 were reported at the usual locations in Allamakee, Des Moines, Dubuque, Muscatine, and Van Buren counties.

Alder Flycatcher: Singles on 1 Jun near Dorchester, Allamakee Co. (BEh), 11 Jun in Yellow River F. (MPR, BPR), 12 Jun at Canoe Creek, Winneshiek Co. (DK), 18 Jun at Highlandville (DK), and 21, 27, 28 Jun at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (JPS) were generally heard giving fee-bee-o calls. The summer status of this species in Iowa is still an enigma.

Willow Flycatcher: 1-4 were reported from Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Pottawattamie, and Wright counties.

Least Flycatcher: Most reports were from NE Iowa as expected: 1 on 10 Jun in Yellow River F. (MPR, BPR), 2 on 18 Jun near Highlandville (DK), 2 on 19 Jun along French Creek in Allamakee Co. (DK), and 3 on 20 Jun near Marquette (DK). Singles were heard on 20 Jun in Boone Co. (EM) and on 28 Jul at Big Creek S.P. (SD).

Say's Phoebe: 1 seen on 4 Jun nw of Hawarden (*DCH) is the first Iowa report in several years.

Western Kingbird: Reported from Fremont, Mills, Pottawattamie, and Woodbury counties; numbers seemed up a bit from last year.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: 1 found near Raymond on 9 Jun was photographed and seen by many through 21 Jul (*TJS, *JF, FLM, MPR).

Purple Martin: Both Fuller and Mosman thought numbers were down; Mosman said that there were 20% fewer birds at the colonies he checks.

Bank Swallow: Munson said it was an abundant nester along the Des Moines R. in Boone Co.

Cliff Swallow: 1,000 on 25 Jul at Big Creek S.P. were the only report of post-breeding concentrations.

Steller's Jay: a report will be referred to the Records Committee.

Brown Creeper: 5, including flying young, on 9 Jun at Huron Island, Des Moines Co., the same site where they nested in 1985 (PCP), is one of only a few recent nesting records. Another on 12 and 23 Jun at Big Sand Mound Preserve acted territorial (PCP).

Carolina Wren: At Shimek F. near Argyle, a pair was feeding a young cowbird on 7 Jun, 2 adults were with 2 young on 19 Jul, and 6 birds on 22 Jul included 3 males and a pair with 1 young (RCe). Singles were in Bellevue S.P. on 30 May (DK), near Bellevue on 30 May (DK), and in Warren Co. on 13 and 21 Jun (JSi).

Winter Wren: A nest was found on 7 Jun at Wildcat Den S.P., where a territorial male had been seen in May (PCP). An adult and 2 fledglings were in White Pine Hollow on 26 Jun (DK). These are the second and third nesting records for this species in Iowa.

Sedge Wren: The only reports were from SW Iowa where Wilson said they were common early in the summer.

Eastern Bluebird: All comments were favorable. Elkhart: fantastic year, should fledge 230 (DDM); Auburn: best year yet, 189 banded so far (RE); Cherokee: fantastic year, 75% of nests successful (MMB); Woodbury Co.: 12 of 30 nest boxes had young (JJ).

Veery: 1-5 were reported from the usual sites in Allamakee, Boone, Dubuque, and Winneshiek counties.

Swainson's Thrush: 1 heard on 3 Jun in Holst F. in Boone Co. (MPr) ties the second latest record.

Northern Mockingbird: There were more reports than usual including birds in Harrison, Louisa (nest), Madison (nest), Mills, Page, Polk (nest), Poweshiek (2 sites), and Story counties; 1 on 23 Jun at Spring Run in Dickinson Co. (MPr) was north of its usual range.

Loggerhead Shrike: There were far more reports than usual, including reports from Boone (2 broods), Fremont, Iowa (brood), Johnson, Kossuth, Madison (6 nests in 2-mile radius), Osceola, Polk (3 broods), Poweshiek (5 sites), and Story (3 broods) counties. A report of 50 nests in Adair and Ringgold counties (D. DeGeus fide JJD) is astonishing.

White-eyed Vireo: 1-2 were reported from Allamakee, Benton, Clayton, Lee, Poweshiek, and Van Buren counties.

Bell's Vireo: 1-2 were reported from the usual sites in Louisa, Mills, Page, Pottawattamie, and Van Buren counties; 1 on 10 Jun at Charlotte in Clinton Co. (PCP) and 1 on 12 Jun near Fountain Springs P. in Delaware Co. (PCP) were north of their usual range.

Yellow-throated Vireo: Noted as abundant on 11 Jun in Allamakee Co. (MPr, BPr).

Blue-winged Warbler: 2-4 were found on 9 Jun at Lacey-Keosauqua S.P., on 10 Jun at Shimek F. near Argyle, and on 11 Jun at Yellow River F. (MPr, BPr).

Northern Parula: Sandrock said they were "thick" in SW Iowa this year. I received reports from Shimek F. near Argyle (MPr, BPr) and Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (JPS); 2 males on 7 Jun at Wildcat Den S.P. (PCP) and 1 on 2 Jul at Dolliver S.P. (DAR) were new sites.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: A male on 3 Jun in Holst F. in Boone Co. (MPr) was the only report.

Yellow-throated Warbler: Birds were at their usual sites in Ledges S.P. and Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. Sandrock commented that numbers were down at Lacey-Keosauqua, with only 4-5 pairs this year compared to a more normal of 14-15.

Cerulean Warbler: 1-4 were reported at the usual sites in Allamakee, Boone, Clayton, Dubuque, Lee, and Van Buren counties; 1 on 2 Jun at Pine Lake S.P. (MPr) and 1 on 5 Jun at Brushy Creek in Webster Co. (DAR) were at new sites.

Black-and-white Warbler: A male on 7, 10 Jun at Shimek F. near Argyle (RCe, JCe, MPr, BPr) is one of few recent summer records.

American Redstart: Munson reported 75 along 20 miles of the Des Moines R. in Boone Co.

Prothonotary Warbler: Reports from the Mississippi R. included 8 males on 9 Jun on Huron Island in Des Moines Co. (PCP), 9 (including 1 at a nest hole) on 11 Jun at Nobles Island in Allamakee Co. (MPr, BPr), 8 males on 11 Jun s of Bellevue (PCP), and 8 at Big Sand Mound Preserve on 23 Jun (PCP). The only report away from the river was 1 on 12 Jun at Dudgeon L. (MPr, BPr).

Worm-eating Warbler: Up to 5 males (17 Jun) were at Shimek F. near Argyle this summer. Adults were feeding a young cowbird on 7 Jun, feeding a young Worm-eating Warbler on 13 Jun, and with 2 young warblers on 19 Jul (RCe, JCe). This is one of few Iowa nesting records for this species in this century.

Louisiana Waterthrush: Reported from the usual Boone, Dubuque, Lee, Van Buren, and Webster county sites.

Kentucky Warbler: Reported from the usual Allamakee, Boone, Dubuque, Lee, and Van Buren county sites.

Hooded Warbler: 1-2 males and a female were seen in Shimek F. near Argyle by several observers (RcE, JcE, JF); 1 was in Yellow River F. on 27 Jun (DK).

Canada Warbler: A male was in Shimek F. near Argyle on 28 Jun (RcE, JPS, details).

Yellow-breasted Chat: Singles were reported at Pony Creek, Mills Co. (TB), Saylorville Res. (MPr), Mahaska Co. (DK), Poweshiek Co. (DK), near Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. (MPr), and Effigy Mounds N.M. (DK); 4 males were in Warren Co. on 21 Jun (JSi), and 7 males were in Shimek F. near Argyle on 28 Jun (RcE).

Summer Tanager: 1-2 were at Brush Creek Canyon on 23 May (DK), Shimek F. near Argyle on 7 Jun (FLM), and Lacey-Keosauqua S.P. on 11 and 26 Jun (JF, JPS).

Scarlet Tanager: 1-4 were reported from Allamakee (brood), Mills, Muscatine, and Scott (brood) counties.

Blue Grosbeak: Several were reported in the usual Fremont, Mills, and Pottawattamie county sites where Bray thought they were more common than usual. At Shimek F. near Argyle a nest was found on 28 Jun (JPS, RcE, JcE), confirming nesting for SE Iowa for the second year in a row.

Dickcissel: Numbers were up this year in E and SW Iowa (PCP, BLW).

Rufous-sided Towhee: A nest with eggs was found on 16 Jul in Story Co. (EM).

Clay-colored Sparrow: Details were received for a male seen on 16 Jun 1986 at Doon, Lyon Co. (*MVZ).

Lark Sparrow: 1-2 were reported from Fremont, Louisa (2 nests), Mills, Polk, and Van Buren (brood) counties.

Henslow's Sparrow: Up to 6 males were found on a pasture in Van Buren Co. where they were seen by many from 9 Jun to 19 Jul. Females with nesting material and 2 immatures were also seen (*MPr, *JPS, *JF, RcE).

White-throated Sparrow: I heard in Davenport on 7, 13, and 20 Jun and 4, 5, and 18 Jul (AB) is the first ever for summer in Iowa.

Dark-eyed Junco: 1 seen well in Des Moines on 19 Jul (AB) is only the second summer record for Iowa.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: 10 on 10 Jun at Goose L. in Clinton Co. (PCP) and 17 at Brown's L. on 19 Jun (JJ) were on the edge of this species' Iowa range.

Great-tailed Grackle: After last year's explosion, all reports this year were from SW Iowa. A female and 2 young were seen several times near Riverton A. (WRS), 3 males were at Pacific Junction, Mills Co., on 3 Jun (PW), and 3 males were in Fremont Co. on 9 Jun (TB).

Common Grackle: Cecil noted evidence of flocking as early as 22 Jun.

Brown-headed Cowbird: See notes under Carolina Wren and Worm-eating Warbler.

Orchard Oriole: 1-3 were seen in Boone, Louisa, Muscatine, Story, and Woodbury counties.

House Finch: The expansion of this species across Iowa continues: a pair with 1 young throughout June in Mason City (*JWa); a pair from 17 Jun to 12 Jul near Auburn (RE); 1-3 birds from late May through mid-Jul at two sites in Ames (PM, EK); a male in Iowa City on 5, 6 Jun (CJB); a male at another Iowa City site on 21 Jul (JPS); a pair nesting in Alburnett in Linn Co. (PW); and a male in Cedar Rapids (PW).

Pine Siskin: 1 in Ames on 4 Jun and 12 Jul (EM) and 1 near Auburn on 9-11 Jun (RE) were the only reports.

CONTRIBUTORS

Eloise Armstrong (Booneville); Eugene Armstrong (Booneville); Bart Ballard (Fairfax); Ann Barker (Davenport); Carl J. Bendorf (Iowa City); Tanya Bray (Omaha, NE); Marion M. Brewer (Cherokee); John Cecil (Keokuk); Robert Cecil (Keokuk); George E. Crossley (Dubuque); Rita DeWall (Pocahontas); Steve Dinsmore (Ames); Rita Efta (Auburn); Bruce Ehresman (Boone); Steve Espeland (Boone); Jim Fuller (Iowa City); Douglas C. Harr (Larchwood); Richard J. Hollis (Iowa City); Jack Jones (Sioux City); Thomas H. Kent (Iowa City); Erwin E. Klaas (Ames); Darwin Koenig (Montezuma); Ted LaGrange (Clear Lake); Sharon Laub (Rippey); Paul Martsching (Ames); Francis L. Moore (Waterloo); D. Dean Mosman (Elkhart); Erik Munson (Ames); Peter C. Petersen (Davenport); Beth Proescholdt (Liscomb); Mark Proescholdt (Liscomb); Doug A. Reeves (Boone); James P. Sandrock (Iowa City); W. Ross Silcock (Tabor); Jim Sinclair (Indianola); Thomas J. Staudt (Iowa City); Dennis Thompson (Des Moines); Jan Walter (Mason City); Harold White (Estherville); Pete Wickham (Cedar Rapids); Barbara L. Wilson (Hastings); Hank Zaletel (Colo); and Marie V. Zangger (Larchwood).

COMMENT

The federal Conservation Reserve Program is in its second year, and sign-ups in Iowa passed 1.5 million acres this summer. This land is to be set aside for 10 years and could provide good habitat for some birds. If the program persists and reasonable rules for planting cover on the land are enforced, it could have a major effect on some bird species in Iowa, especially grassland species. On the negative side, rule changes and local interpretation of those rules, the patchy nature of much of the land entered into the program, and the poor cover crop planted on some of the land negate the program's potential value in providing nesting cover for many species. Ring-necked Pheasant brood counts were up 30% and Gray Partridge were up 62% this year, which suggests a positive effect. Petersen's data from two eastern Iowa Breeding Bird Surveys suggest increases for Dickcissels, but declines for Vesper and Savannah sparrows, compared to last year. I wish I knew what all of this meant for Iowa's birds, but must confess that I do not.

I greatly appreciate the help of Steve Dinsmore in compiling and writing the report and of James Sandroek in compiling information on weather conditions.

4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50010

BIRD IDENTIFICATION QUIZ

THOMAS H. KENT

Identification of birds involves more than just recognition of species. Plumages vary with sex, age, and molt cycle. The three shorebirds on the facing page illustrate some of these differences.

For each of the three birds, answer the following questions before turning the page for my discussion of the answers.

1. What plumage is the bird in?
2. What is the sex of the bird?
3. What month of the year was the picture taken?
4. Name the feathers indicated by the arrow.
5. Name the species.

Bonus question: Which picture was taken in Iowa?

A



B



C



ANSWERS AND DISCUSSION

Plumage. Bird A is in basic (winter) plumage. Diminished to absent color and markings on both upperparts and underparts are typical of shorebirds in this plumage. Bird B is in alternate (breeding) plumage. Note the feather edging on the upperparts and bold marks on the underparts typical of this plumage. The color photographs show rust on the shoulder, superciliary, and auriculars. Bird C is in juvenal plumage. The prominent feather edging on the upperparts (mimicking alternate plumage) and poorly marked underparts (mimicking basic plumage) characterize the juvenal plumage.

Sex. As with most shorebirds, the sexes have a similar appearance.

Month. Most adult shorebirds molt to basic plumage after returning from the breeding grounds, typically attaining basic plumage in August or September; juveniles molt into basic plumage somewhat later. Any month from September to March would be reasonable for bird A. Molt to alternate plumage begins before and continues during spring migration, and adults return south in this plumage. Feather wear is usually evident on returning birds. The bird illustrated in B is not worn, so May or June would be a good answer. Juvenal plumage is attained after the downy feathers are shed and is worn into fall. Some juvenal feathers can be retained all winter. August or September would be a good answer for bird C.

Arrows. Each of the arrows points to scapular feathers: the upper row in bird C, the lower row in bird A, and the shoulder area in bird B. On standing shorebirds the scapulars cover much of the wing. The three rows beneath the scapulars (not always well seen) are the wing coverts.

Species. All three birds are Western Sandpipers. Basic plumage birds cannot be reliably distinguished from Semipalmated Sandpiper. Although Western Sandpipers have longer, less tapered bills with a droop at the tip, there is overlap in bill features for the two species. The extensive, bold triangular marks on the breast (along with rufous in the scapulars, superciliary, and auriculars) make the alternate plumage distinctive. The juvenile bird is distinguished from Semipalmated Sandpiper by the bill and appearance of the scapulars. The smaller upper scapulars have dark centers with rufous edges; the larger lower scapulars have dark centers with white edges and some rufous. Some Semipalmated Sandpipers have buffy to rufous feather edging, but it is uniform for all of the feathers of the upperparts. Juvenile Semipalmated Sandpipers are dark around the eye with incomplete light eye ring; the Western's eye is beady on a light background.

Bonus. Most Western Sandpipers seen in Iowa are in juvenal plumage and most are seen in August and early September. This is a coastal species that nests in Alaska and Siberia. East Coast birds migrating north in spring are rarely seen in the Midwest. In the fall, a few adults and more juveniles pass through Iowa. In Iowa, I have encountered adults in alternate plumage in July, but not in spring. I know of no records of basic plumage Western Sandpipers in Iowa.

Photos. A. 6 Oct 1985, New York. Photo by A. Morris from the VIREO collection. B. Breeding grounds in Alaska (no date). Photo by P. G. Connors from the VIREO collection. C. 15 Aug 1987, Riverton A., Fremont Co., Iowa. Photo by Doug Rose on the Annual I.O.U. Summer Field trip.

VISUAL RESOURCES FOR ORNITHOLOGY

THOMAS H. KENT

Visual Resources for Ornithology (VIREO) is a collection of color and black-and-white photographs of birds from all over the world. The collection was started in 1979 with the aid of a large private grant and is housed at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Original color photographs are kept at refrigerator temperature in a moisture proof environment, so that they will last for centuries. Detailed descriptions of the operation of this valuable collection have been published (Myers et al. 1984, 1985). Closely associated with VIREO and housed in the same facilities is the American Birding Association's Records File, a collection of photographs of unusual North American birds (Kaufman et al. 1985).

I visited the VIREO collection on 22 July 1986 to find out more about the collection and to see how it might be used. I made an appointment in advance. Upon arrival at the Academy, I signed in at the guard desk and waited to be ushered through the old building to the two upstairs rooms where VIREO is housed. Geoff Labaron showed me how the photographs were selected, coded, duplicated, and filed on plastic sheets in large filing cabinets.

The simplest way to obtain copies of the color slides is to order special sets (just over \$1.00 per slide). The sets consist of the best photos of each species within the following groups: herons (40), waterfowl (60), raptors (50), shorebirds (60), and owls (20). The next easiest procedure is to order individual photos from an order sheet (\$2.00 per slide). The order form indicates what types of photos (male, female, immature, nest, flight, foraging, display) are available; each dot on the form is keyed to the best photograph in the category. A somewhat less precise way of obtaining photographs from the collection is to make a "want list" and to ask VIREO to choose the best available photos. This would work if one had a particular need, and could be used to get prints from the collection of black-and-white photographs. Finally, one can visit the collection and look through photos.

I looked at all of the shorebirds, some of the gulls, immature swans, and Western and Clark's grebes. The shorebird photographs nearly filled a whole file drawer, with several sheets of 20 photos for many species. I selected for duplication several slides illustrating plumage sequences of peeps. There were fewer gulls, mostly from the East Coast. At this time, I realized that the big contributors to the collection have been from the East. There were no pictures of some common gulls of the western United States. I did not find the photos of the immature swans I was looking for, and Clark's Grebes were not well represented.

The photos are well labeled by species, photographer, and general location (e.g., state), but do not contain the date. This was frustrating when I was trying to evaluate plumages. I was told that there were dates for some of the photos in the computer database. Since I was familiar with the IBM personal computer and the dBASE III software that they use, Labaron allowed me to use the computer to look up the dates on photos I had selected. I found most of them quickly.

I met Rob Cardillo who handles technical aspects of the collection and Kenn Kaufman who manages the ABA collection. Kaufman recently has published many excellent VIREO photos in *Birding* and *American Birds*.

It is too bad that the photos cannot be housed in display panels for viewing and selection. I thought the most valuable aspect of the collection was its size. Much can be learned from a large series of photos.

Anyone may contribute photographs to the collection. There are still many areas of need and areas where better pictures would improve the collection. VIREO will return your original or a high quality duplicate. This collection is already a superb resource and permanent repository of the world's best bird photos. I hope it will be perpetuated. The charge for the photos is quite modest considering all of the effort needed to develop the collection. Forms for ordering or submitting photos can be obtained from VIREO, 19th and the Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

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211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240

FROM THE EDITOR

THOMAS H. KENT

A number of changes have occurred since my last column in the Winter issue of *Iowa Bird Life*. With the second issue of the year we went from computer generated type-set copy to computer generated laser copy. How many of you noticed the difference? The copy for each of the last three issues has come from one computer file.

I am sorry to report that Jim Sandroock has decided not to continue as Associate Editor. He was extremely helpful in shaping the style of the journal and I enjoyed working with him.

The inflow of new material for the journal that occurred early in the year has slowed to a trickle. It takes considerable effort and foresight to solicit enough material in advance, so spontaneously solicited articles and notes are much appreciated. The first identification quiz appears in this issue. Please let me know how you like it, and send suggestions for improvement.

I thought we would have some lively and controversial letters to the editor, but none have been forthcoming. If you have ideas for articles on birders, birding areas, or identification, please let me know. A number of new books have appeared that need critical review. Let me know what additional topics you would like to see in the journal.

I would like to thank the authors who contributed material this year and the following individuals for reviewing manuscripts: Carl Bendorf, Jim Dinsmore, Jim Fuller, Darwin Koenig, Pete Petersen, Jim Sandroock, and Barb Wilson.